Department and their entertainment in the Revenue Department was difficult. According to him, one from every 17 Brahmins and one from every 79 Nayars were Government servants, while among Christians there was only one Government servant for every 475 persons. The Revenue Department was the most important of all departments in the State for more reasons than one. Agriculture was the chief occupation of the people. The assignment of land, mutation of rights in respect of land, assessment of land, recovery of land tax, preparation of electoral rolls, grant of agricultural loans, recovery of loans and other items of work directly connected with land were attended to by the officers of the Land Revenue Department and the Christians were not entertained in such an important department for a long time. But as a result of repeated representations and constitutional agitations, the Revenue Department was thrown open to the Christians, Ezhavas and others similarly circumstanced. Although 12 years had elapsed since the Department was so thrown open there were no Christians either among Dewan Peishkars or Division Assistant and only three among the Tahsildars were Christians. In the lower ranks their number was very few. To remove this inequality a Christian should be selected as a Peishkar for one of the impending vacancies from among the Second or District Judges and six or seven Christians should be selected from the Secretariat or other offices for appointment as Tahsildars and two or three for being appointed as Division Assistants Forty per cent. of the appointments in the Department should be reserved for Christians and filled up either by promotion in the Department or by recruitment from outside.

Similarly, in the other departments also arrangements should be made for reserving 35 to 40 per cent. of the appointments to Christians.

In conclusion, the member said that in the Recruitment Committee, Christians, other than Roman Catholics, were not represented.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Thomas, the claims of the Christians will be duly considered.

170. Public service.

MR. N. GOPALA PANIKKAR (*Ambalapuzha taluk, Group I*) said that the administration of every State always aimed at the welfare of the people. But the officers appointed to carry on the administration forgot this fundamental principle and were subject to bribery, external influence, and communal bias. Unnecessay appointments were created and undue salaries paid to the incumbents. An untainted public service was a desirable and necessary thing. The defects in the public service as a result of corruption on the part of the officers had been brought to the notice of the Government through the Assembly and the Council. But it was regrettable that the Government had not taken any steps to put down corruption after making the necessary enquiry. The Government could not deny the existence of corruption in the public service. On one

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

occasion, the Government had admitted that corruption in Travancore was comparatively less than in other States. Corruption should be stamped out irrespective of its magnitude. But the Government were not taking any action against the officers when complaints were preferred by the public. The complaints in respect of the officers involved in the students' strike, the Shertallai disturbances, railway report, etc., were instances in point. The Government should realise that the complaints were preferred not out of spite against particular officers but out of real grievance. They should therefore be enquired into and the culprits punished. As an example, the member referred to the practice of checking buses by the Police constables. Though overloading was an offence, it was tolerated if the checking constables were tipped. Similarly, the action of the Police in handling the picketing volunteers was not taken notice of. There was no objection to punish the picketers if picketing was an offence. But to handle them roughly was intolerable. There were instances of corruption and high-handedness among Police officers. Corruption among the process servers of the Judicial Department was an open secret. The process servers returned the processes unserved after taking tips. Again, in the Income Tax Department, the clerks were sending notices to persons having no taxable incomes and taking tips when examining their accounts. In the Registration Department, the copying clerks demanded fees, even for comparing documents. Corruption among the officers should be stamped out and the public service purified.

Sense of duty among the officers was decreasing day by day. The chief reason was the way in which appointments and promotions were made. Only men of character, ability and responsibility should be appointed to responsible posts. In the Judicial Department, the Government have prescribed a minimum outturn for the presiding officers. But no punishment was awarded to those who did not work up to this standard. So long as this practice continued, officers were sure to be lazy. Lazy and inefficient men should not be entertained in any department, especially in the Judicial Department. When judicial officers were recruited from the Bar, the conduct and character and their knowledge of law should be duly taken into account. Only men of good conduct and having a good practice should be selected as officers. Promotions should not be made merely on the basis of seniority. Sometimes the promotions were not based on any principle. Treasury Officers were appointed as Assistant Devaswom Commissioners, Assistant Devaswom Commissioners as Division Assistants and Secretaries as Peishkars.

The pay of the officers of the lower ranks should be revised so as to place them above want. Needy people were naturally corrupt. The Pakuthi subordinates had tight work but their pay was incommensurate with their work. The revision of pay of the officers of the ubordinate ranks involved additional expenditure. The money required or the increased expenditure should be found by abolishing unnecessary appointments, such as the Assistant Superintendents of Police and the Experts of the Industries Department. The Industries

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

Department as a whole had not done any useful work and had not produced any tangible result. All its activities were merely experimental. The Department at this rate of working was not of any use to the public and could be abolished. The Government Museum was established with the object of developing arts and science. But the institution was not working up to this ideal. The two officers in the institution were not qualified in science. If a duly qualified officer be appointed there one of the two places could be abolished. The Development Departments could be amalgamated and placed under one officer. The pay of the Chief Engineer could be reduced and there was no need for a Personal Assistant and a Superintendent in his office. All unnecessary appointments should be abolished and the pay of all officers drawing above Rs. 100 should be reduced by a certain percentage. The amount thus saved should be utilised for enhancing the pay of he officers of the lower ranks.

Appointments should not be made on a communal basis. Qualified and capable persons should alone be appointed in the public service. And for purposes of recruitment to the public service, a competitive examination should be instituted.

The Public Service Committee to be constituted should be asked to enquire into the corruption prevalent among officers.

Lastly, the newspapers of the State should be allowed the freedom f criticism of officers in the public service by repealing the Newspapers Regulation.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Corruption in public service, Mr. Gopala Panikkar, must be stamped out; but it can be done only on definite evidence. It is no good making indefinite charges. Every man must be tried and convicted on proper evidence. When specific complaints are made, enquiries are held; and if the evidence is good enough, the men are punished.

Appointments are not made on mere seniority. They are made on seniority combined with merit.

The suggestions to reduce the number of appointments and to raise the pay in the subordinate service deserves very serious consideration.

The question of recruitment is being considered, as you know by a committee; and I hope its report will soon be ready.

171. Public Service.

MR. K. AIYAPPAN (*Shertallai taluk, Group I*) spoke about the need for giving due representation to all classes of the subjects of the State in the public service. The question of representation in publice service was a long-standing and vexed one and no time should be lost in solving this problem to the satisfaction and contentment of all. In order to remove the inequalities that certain backward communities were suffering from in the matter of recruitment to the public service, Government had issued circulars to all heads of departments to give preference to unrepresented and backward communities in filling up new vacancies

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly